

They cannot vote. They are a homeless people. They only want to put the Palestinians in the Israeli territory, but they will not give any flexibility to these poor people in their countries. Why is it totally Israel's burden to give up their land to make themselves unsafe because Jordan, Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and Syria do not want the Palestinians in their country?

These borders have been fungible for thousands of years. To argue that the Palestinians' border should be precisely right here, the Arab countries need to show some real concern; not just lip service on what Israel's obligation is to the Palestinians, but what their own obligations are to help these poor homeless people.

The big conflicts in the Middle East are not going to be between Israel and the Palestinians. There are other conflicts far broader with bigger countries. Israel clearly needs to come to peace with their Palestinian neighbors. They have much more, and long-term, in common than they do with Iran and Iraq, and other greater sources of conflict in that region.

But ultimately, Israel must have the right to exist. People have to be able to go to a bar mitzvah, to a pizza place, to move around in a shopping center, to go to the synagogue, without being in fear of being terrorized and blown up. They have to be able to live in their houses without people shooting down on them from the mountains, or from planes overhead.

It is important on this Independence Day that we show courage and stand with our friend and ally, Israel, as they stood with us.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. HART). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PALLONE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maine (Mr. ALLEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. ALLEN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. LANTOS address the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL SECURITY TO ALL AMERICANS, AND ESPECIALLY TO WOMEN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Madam Speaker, tonight many of the Democratic women come to the floor to speak on issues that were raised during the recess when we visited with the women members and women constituents in our districts.

Because I represent the caucus chair on the Democratic side, I have been asked to speak at a lot of organizations to talk about where we are going in terms of Social Security. Madam Speaker, tonight we will try to see whether we can find some sense of where Social Security is going, and in fact speak about the vital importance of Social Security to all Americans, but especially women and minorities and persons who suffer from disability.

At the present time, it is a lightning rod here in the House, and it incites strong responses. That is what the women across this Nation are asking. We recognize that the administration and the majority here in this House have proposed to privatize Social Security, which has created a firestorm of controversy. This proposal, if enacted, would create the possibility of individuals to invest in the stock market through personal accounts.

Now, women whom I have spoken with certainly say that this will not benefit them at all, and they believe that a proposal such as this is a bad idea, and reckless public policy.

So the Democratic women have grave concerns about the implications of privatizing Social Security for the following reasons: Women constitute the majority of Social Security beneficiaries, equalling approximately 60 percent of the recipients over the age of 65. Roughly 72 percent of beneficiaries above the age of 85 are women. So as a matter of necessity, 27 percent of women over 65 count on Social Security for 90 percent of their income. These are reasons why they cannot see anything that will drive funding from a pot that they perceive will give them the benefits that they sorely need in the event of the death of their husbands.

Privatization of Social Security will be devastating because women earn less than men, and they count upon Social Security's progressive benefit structure to ensure that they have an adequate income upon retirement. Women are also less likely to be covered by an employer-sponsored pension plan. Hence, Social Security makes up a larger portion of their retirement income, and in many instances, it is their only source of income.

So in the context of Social Security, women are also affected by other factors, which include living 6 to 8 years

longer than men and having to stretch their retirement savings over a longer period of time. Furthermore, Madam Speaker, women lose an average of 14 years of earnings due to time out from the work force. We recognize what that is: from raising children to taking care of ailing parents. In most cases, a lot of women have to take care of sick husbands.

So because women generally experience a higher incidence of part-time employment, many of them have less of an opportunity to save for retirement, thus relying completely on Social Security to subsist.

There are also some startling economic realities that Americans need to be informed about relative to privatizing Social Security. Privatization would result in a drawdown of over \$1.2 trillion from the Social Security and Medicare trust funds over the next 10 years to finance individual accounts, thereby increasing the long-term deficit of Social Security by 25 percent.

Furthermore, privatization efforts will not restore long-term solvency to the trust fund, and will result in reduced benefits for women, the elderly, and minorities who benefit from the progressive structure of the Social Security system. In fact, Madam Speaker, one plan put forward by the President's Commission on Social Security would reduce benefits to all recipients by 46 percent. Benefits for future retirees would be tied to growth in prices, rather than wages.

Now, under this scenario, retirees would not be able to maintain the standard of living in retirement that they earn during their working years. The combined effort of the proposed changes would mean benefit cuts of 30 percent for a worker retiring in 2075.

A very important fact, Madam Speaker, that is not being touted by advocates of privatization is that although investing in individual accounts is voluntary, benefit cuts would apply to everyone. Current reality makes it abundantly clear that it is foolheaded to trust a universal defined benefit and totally portable system to the variances of the stock market.

If we want a glimpse of the future, we need to look no further than the Enron situation to get a glimpse of what might loom on the horizon if we allow Social Security to be privatized.

As Democrats, we believe in supporting and protecting the interests of all American workers. Therefore, we cannot and must not allow privatization to become a reality. We are duty-bound to preserve Social Security into the future. Privatizing Social Security and raiding its trust fund would be unfair and irresponsible.

As leaders of this House and as women representatives of constituents who have so much at stake regarding Social Security, we are compelled to tell Americans the truth about proposals to privatize Social Security.